

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG, ECON, UR

SUBJECT: APPARENT REVISION DOWNWARD OF 1976 COAL PRODUCTION TARGET

SUMMARY: 1976 COAL PRODUCTION TARGETS MAY HAVE BEEN LOWERED FROM 715 TO 709 MILLION TONS. A CENTRAL PRESS ANALYSIS HAS ALSO REFERRED TO "UNEXPECTED COMPLICATION" OF MINING-GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS AS A CAUSE OF CURRENT PRODUCTION PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. AN UNSIGNED "ECONOMIC COMMENTARY" IN SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA ON DECEMBER 8 STATES THAT SOVIET MINERS THIS YEAR HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO EXTRACT "709 MILLION TONS OF COAL, INCLUDING 17 MILLION TONS ABOVE PLAN." ABOUT "13 MILLION TONS" OF THE ABOVE-PLAN SUM HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECORDED, WHICH, HOWEVER, IS ALMOST 2.7 MILLION TONS BELOW TARGET. COAL PRODUCTION OVERALL FOR THE FIRST ELEVEN MONTHS OF 1976, ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, IS RUNNING TWO PERCENT HIGHER THAN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

2. WORK IN THE COAL INDUSTRY IS DESCRIBED AS PROCEEDING "STEADILY BUT PROBLEM AREAS ARE PINPOINTED. THE PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION "EKIBASTUZUGOL" IS MORE THAN TWO MILLION TONS BELOW THE 11 MONTH TARGET. AND THE DONETZ AND KUZNETZ BASINS, WHILE "SIGNIFICANTLY" OVERFULFILLING 11 MONTH PRODUCTION TARGETS, TOGETHER, ARE ALMOST 3.2 MILLION TONS BELOW THEIR ABOVE-PLAN GOALS. IN ALL, 20 PRODUCTION ASSOCIATIONS AND A "SIGNIFICANT" NUMBER OF MINES AND PITS

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HAVE NOT MET THEIR ABOVE-PLAN "SOCIALIST OBLIGATIONS."

3. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, THIS MIXED PERFORMANCE IS DUE IN PART TO "UNEXPECTED COMPLICATION" OF MINING-GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS IN CERTAIN ENTERPRISES. THE MAIN REASONS, HOWEVER, ARE SAID TO BE THE INABILITY OF MANAGERS AND SPECIALISTS TO SEARCH OUT INTERNAL RESERVES, ENSURE MAXIMAL USE OF EQUIPMENT, AND PROPERLY TRAIN AND ORGANIZE CADRES.

4. COMMENT: THE PUBLISHED 1976 PLAN TARGET FOR COAL WAS 715 MILLION TONS, A TWO PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 1975 LEVEL OF 701 MILLION TONS. THE PRESENT ARTICLE INDICATES THAT THIS TARGET MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO 709 MILLION TONS, INCLUDING THE "ABOVE-PLAN" COMPONENT.

5. SOMEWHAT INTRIGUING ALSO IS THE REFERENCE TO "UNEXPECTED COMPLICATIONS" IN MINING-GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS. WHILE NOT FURTHER ELUCIDATED IN THE ARTICLE, WE SPECULATE THIS MIGHT REFER TO STRUCTURE OF BEDS BEING MINED, LAGGING GEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION, AND/OR BOTTLENECKS IN BRINGING NEW CAPACITY ON STREAM. THESE PROBLEMS COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE APPARENT REDUCTION IN THE OVERALL TARGET.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING WHETHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES CAN CONFIRM THAT 1976 COAL PRODUCTION TARGETS HAVE BEEN LOWERED. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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